

# Afraid of Fundraising?

Try this Storytelling Trick



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Many nonprofit professionals dread fundraising.

Fundraising can feel awkward, pushy, or like you're begging. But what if you could ask for support in a way that felt natural, engaging, and even enjoyable?

The secret?

Let a fundraising story do the asking for you.

### What Is a Fundraising Story?

A fundraising story isn't a generic success story about your organization. It's a donor-focused story designed to move someone to take action.

A strong fundraising story follows this structure:

1. **A person, cause, or community in need.** If your nonprofit serves people, focus on a real individual. If you work in animal rescue, environmental protection, historical preservation, or another cause, focus on a specific animal, place, or urgent situation.
2. **A struggle or threat.** Show a vivid moment of hardship, risk, or threat.
3. **A turning point.** This is when help (from someone like the donor) steps in.
4. **An open ending.** The problem isn't fully solved yet, and more help is needed from donors.

### The Storytelling Trick That Changes Everything

Instead of focusing on the ask, focus on the story's turning point - the moment of transformation. A great fundraising story naturally leads the donor to want to give - without you having to push.

Here's the trick:

→ Start with struggle, highlight the turning point, and make the donor the hero of the solution.

When done right, the ask becomes a natural next step rather than an awkward demand.

## Step-By-Step: How to Use This Trick

### #1. Start with a Struggle or Threat

Describe a real moment of difficulty for the person, animal, place, or cause your nonprofit helps. The more specific and sensory, the better.

**Example:**

"Luna, a stray dog, limped along the roadside, her ribs visible under her dusty fur. She hadn't eaten in days, and every step made her wince in pain."

**Avoid:** "Many dogs are abandoned every year." (Too broad and impersonal)

### #2. Show the Turning Point

This is where hope enters the story—when help (like your nonprofit's work) makes an impact.

**Example:**

"A kind stranger called our rescue center, and within hours, Luna was wrapped in a warm blanket, receiving medical care."

**Avoid:** "Our organization helps animals in need." (Too vague, no emotional moment)

### #3. Make the Donor the Hero

Instead of saying, "Donate to support our work," position the donor as the key to the next success story.

**Example** (Animal Rescue):

"Right now, another dog like Luna is waiting for a lifesaving rescue. Your gift of \$35 provides emergency medical care and a warm shelter. Will you help a dog and be their hero?"

**Avoid:** "Please consider making a donation today." (Too passive and transactional)

## Why This Works

- It creates an emotional connection before making an ask.
- The donor sees themselves as part of the transformation.
- It turns the ask into an invitation rather than a request.

## Try It Yourself: A Simple Rewrite Exercise

Take a fundraising message you already use and rewrite it using this storytelling trick:

1. Identify a real person, animal, place, or cause your nonprofit has helped.
2. Describe their struggle or threat with vivid, emotional details.
3. Show the turning point when they got help.
4. Position the donor as the hero who can make this transformation possible for someone else in need.

### Want an even easier way to start?

Use this plug-and-play formula:

"[Name or place] was [struggle or threat in vivid detail]. [They/It] felt [emotion or danger]. But then, [turning point—what changed?]. Today, because someone like you stepped in, [positive outcome]. Right now, another [person, animal, or cause] is waiting. Will you be their hero?"

### Example:

"James opened his fridge and saw only a half-empty milk carton and a single slice of bread. He felt defeated. But then, a caring neighbor told him about the community food pantry. Today, because someone like you stepped in, James has warm meals and fresh groceries for his kids. Right now, another family is waiting for that same kindness. Will you be their hero?"

If you're afraid of fundraising, shift your mindset: You're not asking for money - you're inviting someone into a story. And when people feel emotionally connected, they want to be part of the solution.

Try this trick in your next fundraising email or speech—and see the difference it makes.

## Want More Storytelling Strategies Like This?

Join Us at the Nonprofit Storytelling Conference!

Mastering the art of storytelling makes fundraising easier, more effective, and even enjoyable. At the Nonprofit Storytelling Conference, you'll discover how to craft stories that inspire action, deepen donor relationships, and make your fundraising feel effortless.

To learn more about the conference, go to: <https://nonprofitstorytellingconference.com>

